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MR. CHANDLER'S ORATION.

THE MORALS OF FREEDOM.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES

OF

THE CITY OF BOSTON,

JULY 4, 1844.

BY PELEG W. CHANDLER.

BOSTON:
JOHN H. EASTBURN, CITY PRINTER.
1844.

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CITY OF BOSTON.

In the Board of Aldermen, July 8, 1844.

Resolved, by unanimous vote, that the thanks of this Board be presented, in behalf of the City Council, to Peleg W. Chandler, Esq., for the able and eloquent Oration delivered by him, before the Municipal Authorities of the City, at the recent celebration of the Anniversary of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States;—and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for the press.

A true copy of Record.

Attest, S. F. McCLEARY, *City Clerk.*

City Hall, July 9, 1844.

Sir,

I have the pleasure to communicate to you a vote of the Board of Aldermen, requesting a copy of your Oration, delivered on the fourth of July, for publication. And I take this opportunity to thank you for the sound and manly sentiments you expressed, and I have no doubt that the publication of your eloquent Address, at this time, will be conducive of much good.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

M. BRIMMER, *Mayor.*

P. W. Chandler, Esq.

ORATION.

On this day, for more than half a century, the people have assembled in every part of our land, to indulge in congratulations upon the success of free institutions, and to recall the history of that event by which they were established. The men of the revolution have been accustomed to join in the festivities of the occasion, and their presence has added interest to the scene, imparting to the orators of the day an animation, that has sometimes exceeded the bounds of sound discretion and cultivated taste. But with the present generation a change is taking place. The scenes of the revolution are growing dim in the distance; those venerable men are no longer with us, and our independence is celebrated by the children's children of those who achieved it. The period for declamation and retrospective boasting has passed away. A more sombre hue now rests upon the day; it has become an occasion of serious investigation into our real condition, and of solemn self-examination.

This manner of spending the fourth of July is less agreeable to our self-love, but it may serve a higher purpose, and have a better influence upon our future welfare. For although the love of country, as a mere instinct of our nature, may be excited to an excessive heat by appeals to our vanity and pride, there is a genial glow, far more to be desired, which is better kept alive by a familiarity with our dangers, and an active knowledge of the duties imposed upon us by our real condition. It is not the part of wisdom to conceal our weaknesses, or to envelope ourselves with a cloud of vanity and self-love, through which the light of truth can never penetrate.

Extremes naturally generate each other. An excess in one direction almost always leads, by the effect of reaction, to an excess in the opposite, as the pendulum, when driven to the extremest limit of its circle, is sure to return to a corresponding distance from the central point. It must be confessed, that the manner of celebrating this day in former times has lately given place to one not less objectionable to all who have faith in the stability of our institutions. The glad sound of ringing bells and the roar of cannon, with which it once was ushered in, and the turmoil and excitement with which it was attended, are surely preferable to that entire absence of all feeling, which indicates an indifference to one of the greatest events recorded in history. He was a gloomy misanthrope who said he would do nothing for posterity because posterity had done nothing for him; but what shall be said of those who refuse,

on a day like this, to turn aside from the cares and anxieties of life, and pay a tribute to the virtues of ancestors, who devoted their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the happiness of their posterity; or who only indulge in gloomy forebodings, and a discontented spirit? Surely the declamation and vapid toasts of earlier times are preferable to this; whilst the enthusiastic faith and glowing hopes—characteristic of a young and energetic people—are more in accordance with the spirit of our history than that morbid conservatism, with eyes behind, that admits nothing of human progress; that exaggerates actual difficulties in our form of government, or depicts in fervid eloquence those which are entirely imaginary.

It is evident that the passions of man have more freedom and are more apparent in a republic than in a despotism; not that man under the former government is more depraved than under the latter, but his passions assume a more distinctive form, and are not so much relieved by an appearance of the opposite good. This is especially the case in a new country like our own. Among a more ancient people the want of freedom is attended by a stronger internal police. Squalid poverty is seen by the side of inordinate wealth, without hope and without contentment. The eye takes in the prison and the palace at the same glance. Violations of the law are followed by speedy justice, whilst the armed battalion instantly rides down the multitude who attempt to resist the law by force. It is natural for the eye to rest upon the most pleasing part of the picture. We for-

get the wretchedness, the poverty, the ignorance of the many, in admiration of the wealth, the learning, the taste of the few. We praise the speedy punishment of the offender, and do not stop to consider the gross defects in the laws which have helped to make him worthy of punishment. We admire the celerity with which sudden outbreaks of the people are checked, but do not inquire into the grievances of which they complain, and to remedy which they make a feeble attempt at combination. With what delight do we gaze on magnificent armies in their splendid array, or the gay trappings of royalty, or noble institutions devoted to science and the arts,—and how easy it is to forget the toiling millions, at whose expense all these are supported, who receive but a scanty subsistence, and whose souls are blinded, stupified, dwarfed, almost annihilated!

But with us the effect is somewhat different. We have no such splendid reliefs to divert attention from our actual evils. Here all is "bare creation." Such as we are, such we must appear. The eye rests at once upon our deformities, and is not attracted by splendid contrasts. Here the million instead of being crushed beneath the weight of power, actually possess all power themselves; and political equality is the birthright of every citizen. In despotisms the government is not a true representative of the people, because it does not depend upon the people. But with us the reverse is true; and he who decides that the general character is lower than in other countries, merely because the government is less magnificent, less

respectable and less effective, forms an opinion upon an entirely false basis. The government of this country is sometimes administered in a manner that must meet the condemnation of good men in every part of the world. As a people, we have often had occasion to feel deep mortification at the proceedings of our rulers. The indignation of all good men has sometimes been roused at the acts of meanness and dishonesty of those in authority, and the mortification has been the deeper in the reflection, that such men received the support of a majority of our citizens, and must be taken as the representatives of our character as a nation.

But they who are filled with gloomy apprehensions, and who see nothing in our condition to excite the liveliest emotions of gratitude for the present, and hope for the future, must also despair of the success of free institutions in any part of the world, and of man's ability for self-government; for in what country could a representative system be carried out with more success than our own? What nations in the old world, embracing the same extent of territory, and equally conflicting interests, would, under the most favorable circumstances, be able to act together with rulers chosen by the people? With what single nation in Europe could the experiment of self-government have the slightest hope of success? Where could a representative assembly meet that would be superior to our own? Would it be in that immense empire in the North which has not yet emerged from barbarism, and where the splen-

dor of despotic sway is in painful contrast with the debasement of savage hordes, whose untaught millions seem beyond the reach of hope? Or in unhappy Spain, distracted by contending factions, and the constant prey of foreign aggression or civil wars? Or in Italy, with her enervating faith, and her degraded population? Or in that nation, where by a most refined policy, education itself is made to serve the purposes of tyranny? Or in France, with her immense standing army and her savage peasantry, ever on the eve of a revolution? Or even in the land from whence we derive our origin; from whom we have our language, and whose arts and literature are all our own? A true representation of the people of that great country would present the most instructive picture to be found in all her history. The greatest wealth, the deepest learning, the most vast attainments, would meet with squalid poverty and abject ignorance, want, wretchedness and crime, such as the world had never seen before. The fierce clansman from his native hills, with the hate of his fathers still glowing in his heart. The wild Irishman from the West, burning to revenge the wrongs of two hundred years. The Chartist from the North. The Rebeccaite from Wales—the starving operative—the dwarfed and stolid miner. Could all these be invested with political power, with what wild energy would their representatives attack the time honored institutions of their native land. And if we could add to these a voice from every region where the tap of the British drum gives notice of conquest if not of injustice

and oppression; in such an assembly from every region of the globe, and representing every tongue that is spoken, who could hope to calm the elements, to restrain the passions, or enlighten the reason? Who can say that a body composed of such materials would exhibit a better moral aspect than our own congress?

But comparisons of this sort are of doubtful utility, and are calculated to flatter national vanity at the expense of truth, inasmuch as all the elements of the case are not ordinarily included in the statement. I hasten from this view of the subject with the more willingness, as there is a constant tendency among our people to praise ourselves, at the expense of other nations. Whenever evils are pointed out, or vices denounced, we set ourselves at work to discover the same in our neighbors, and rest satisfied with the comparison, proclaiming in trumpet tones our virtues and our valor, and pointing out, with wonderful minuteness, the vices, the follies and the crimes of others.

A philosophical writer has observed, that the great danger in a democracy arises from the vanity of the people. The remark, although not made with reference to us, yet seems appropriate to our condition. Various causes have been operating to produce a feeling of confidence in our position, and of indifference to real or apparent dangers. The success of this government has not only been greater than was generally anticipated by its friends, but that success has been attended with constant prophecies of failure. From the first declaration of independence, men have doubted its princi-

ples and had little faith in a government founded on the consent of the governed. Others admitted the principle, but have been filled with constant alarm at the manner in which it was carried out. In the early history of the government difficulties were dwelt upon, which time has proved to be without foundation. Before the convention which adopted the constitution had separated, the declaration was made that it could never succeed; the same thing was repeatedly asserted in the state conventions which ratified the constitution, and some patriots of the revolution saw in our present form of government the grave of all their hopes. In every congress from the first to the present, the safety of our institutions has been asserted to depend upon measures which were not adopted; and in the accession of every administration the end of the government has been firmly predicted. Difficulties of a trifling character have been immensely exaggerated for party purposes, and political alarmists have constantly warned the people that the end was near.

But notwithstanding these things, our course has been onward. The people are prosperous and happy. The industrial resources of the country are every day developed; the rewards of labor are adequate; and on this day many millions of people are rejoicing in the enjoyment of free institutions, and praying for their success amongst the people of every land. In every part of the globe this day is remembered. Not a sea that is not whitened by our canvass; not a port where our flag is not exhibited; not a land where an Ameri-

can bosom does not glow at the recollection of the great event which we are now celebrating.

The warnings of cautious statesmen and the fears of alarmists do not seem to be sustained by facts, and a feeling of confidence has grown up in the stability of our institutions, that nothing can disturb. Having escaped great dangers which have been pointed out before, we fear none that may come hereafter. Having become accustomed to the cry of alarm, it no longer makes any impression upon us, and a feeling of confidence and pride is engendered, which in reality is the most dangerous element in our character. It is said, that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and we are urged to watch with argus eyes those whom we intrust with power. But the remark has more significancy as applied to ourselves. It is not from foreign aggression that our country is threatened. It is not from our rulers that we have reason to fear. It is not war, nor domestic dissention that need alarm us. All these *may* come, but they will come in the train of something worse than all the evils they can ever bring upon us. It is ourselves whom we have reason to fear. It is the loss or the want of virtue and integrity in our own hearts. It is the feeling of vanity and pride that comes with the loss of these, that threaten us with the worst of evils. It is the silent working of wrong principles—the gradual corruption of the people—the loss of conscience and manly integrity, that are calculated to fill with alarm those who have the ability and the disposition to observe them.

Self-government, upon which the theory of a republic rests, is a word of pregnant import. It relates primarily to the individual rather than the mass. Descending from the most important functions of administrative power to the minutest concerns of life, it penetrates the heart of every individual, seeking out his hidden motives, and laying bare his most secret thoughts. Self-government by a people necessarily implies self-government by each individual composing that people; the one is inseparable from the other. For no community of men can be said to govern itself, unless those who compose it are able to bring themselves under the restraint implied by that most significant term.

Truths so self-evident would hardly need to be stated, if there were not a disposition to generalize every thing that relates to public virtue. We have an abundance of integrity in the abstract. The public faith, we are fond of saying, is untarnished, and never was public morality more highly esteemed, or national vices more detested, than with us. When were the interests of humanity more regarded? When were all the charities of life more exercised? When were the means of general education more generally diffused? When were benevolent associations of every name and character more universal? But the welfare of a republic does not rest upon these high sounding and external facts. It is not an admiration of virtue on the large scale. It is not hospitals founded with princely liberality. It is not charitable institutions; no, nor the inviolability of public engagements, not all these are suf-

ficient for the preservation of a government like ours; for they may all exist in despotisms, and are found in far greater perfection among other nations than in our own. But it is that personal integrity as between man and man—that purity of character enjoined by the commandments of God,—honesty, sobriety, self-culture, self-government, which are absolutely essential.

Our government rests, most emphatically, upon the people as individuals, and every citizen is doing his part in sustaining it by the practice of virtue in his sphere, or in undermining it by a practical disregard of those principles which are absolutely essential to its stability.

We are apt to regard the state as something different from an assemblage of individuals; to suppose that it rests upon some other foundation than their will, and will continue in operation from some power independent of the people. This is indeed true of most nations that we read of in history, but the theory of our government is, that the people are themselves the state. Upon them it rests; from them it takes its character. The influence of every man is thus felt throughout the remotest parts of the nation, and the government is but a representation of the moral and intellectual character of the individual citizens. It must truly represent them, for although at one time it may be of a more elevated character than the people, and at another time less elevated, it must ordinarily and finally come to this point as certainly as water finds its level. A dividing line between public and private virtue in a republic can

never be discerned, can never exist. One is the necessary attendant of the other. If not identical they are inseparable, and upon them both the welfare of the state depends :

———Facies non omnibus una
Nec diversa tamen ; qualem decet esse sororum.

Public morality, national honor and integrity, in a government where individual morality, private honor and integrity are generally disregarded, would be an impossible anomaly ; and we shall invariably find, that public morals and private virtue are the necessary and inseparable elements in every free country. Whenever the principles of justice, the distinction between right and wrong, are not clearly understood and appreciated; whenever specious theories which strike at the foundation of the social system are popular with the people ; whenever in the personal relations of life a low standard of morality is established, it follows as a natural consequence that the standard of public virtue will also be low. Law and order will be openly decried or secretly opposed, and those who administer the law will be obnoxious to the people. In the business community a wild and reckless spirit of speculation will sweep away the ancient landmarks, leaving only scattered fragments and blackened ruins. And in the political world the want of principle will be still more apparent, until at length whole states will exhibit a want of faith and honor that must justly draw upon them the contempt and scorn of the civilized world.

It is in vain to deny, that many elements are now at

work which are totally opposed to the theory of our government, and a spirit that leads directly to disorganization. A distinction is practically made between private and public faith, that is destructive of the social system. The homely virtues are not enforced with the zeal and earnestness of other days. The wildest theories are industriously propagated and are defended with no little zeal and ability; and there seems to be infused throughout the whole texture of society a doctrine of expediency as opposed to right; while those ambitious of wealth or power are hurrying on without any regard to the rights of others or the claims of humanity, and with no fixed notions of principle. This spirit is manifesting itself in a manner that cannot be mistaken. What need is there to point to the many ruins that deform our land, or to call attention to the riots and the crimes, the violence and the murders, from which we turn as from a thrice told tale? Why allude to the many swindling combinations of the past few years, or the enormous frauds in which sovereign states have participated, or the gross attacks upon the judiciary, or the scenes of atrocity in our deliberative assemblies, or acts of meanness and unmitigated villany which have been perpetrated by men in public office? These are only the external manifestation of evils that lie under the surface—of a disease that is near the heart of the nation and is sending its poison through every part of the system.

We are fond of calling the present a remarkable age. If by this is meant that the present age differs

from those that have preceded it, the remark is equally true of every age since the creation. But if it be meant that the present age is entitled to a higher rank in the scale of moral and intellectual being than any other, the remark is not true. The sword of Cæsar, the pencil of Apelles, the chisel of Phidias, the pyramids of Egypt, the Grecian temples, the Roman aqueduct, the strains of Homer, the death of Socrates, the groves of Academus, the literature and the arts of ancient states, the Roman virtue, the Grecian eloquence, the heroism, the courage, the greatness of soul, and all we know of ancient lore, rise up to disprove any such vain assertion.

The present age seems distinguished above all others in intellectual culture, as opposed to moral. The whole aim appears to be to cultivate the understanding. To this every effort tends. To this all ambition is directed. To this every sacrifice is made. Education, in the popular acceptation of the term, is understood to apply to the intellectual faculties alone. The moral powers are comparatively neglected. The great effort is for the true rather than the good. The "diffusion of knowledge" is supposed to be the great panacea that is to cure all our evils. To teach the people how to read and to write, is regarded as the most essential thing in our system. But I do not hesitate to say, that knowledge of itself is not a positive good. The training of the intellectual faculties, without a corresponding culture of the moral nature, *may* be a positive evil. To educate a man's understanding, without

at the same time strengthening his moral character, is only to give him greater power to injure society and himself. And yet this pernicious principle is very generally received. We judge of men by their intellectual acquirements rather than their moral. We admire what is termed genius without regard to virtue. More, we excuse the want of virtue in those whom the world term great.

In this respect there is a wide departure from the character of the fathers of New England. The puritans were emphatically men of principle. They were morally rather than intellectually great. To maintain what they believed to be right they exerted all their energies, and were ready to lay down their lives in defence of the truth. They educated their children in the same manner. They regarded the moral character of infinitely greater consequence than the intellectual, and labored with untiring zeal to instil into the youthful mind the principles of truth, integrity, religion. Nor were they deficient in the softer qualities that dignify and adorn humanity. Stern and uncompromising in everything that related to principle, they were yet in their domestic relations the most tender and affectionate of men. And so of those gentle spirits who had come with them to these uninviting shores—the puritan wife and mother. What sacrifices did they meekly endure for the truth! Poverty, famine, death, all these could not appal them. With what confidence and hope the gentle wife placed her hand in that of her husband, and sought with him a new home in a strange land. And

lo! the desert smiled, the wilderness blossomed as a rose, the tree of life was planted in the midst of their habitation. There, morning and evening the prayer of faith was uttered in thankfulness and hope. And there were early inculcated, from the mother's lips, obedience to God, respect for authority, a love of law and order, and the principles of liberty. In these homes, around these puritan hearth-stones, the grand principles of self-government were always taught; and in defence of these homes and of the principles there inculcated, their children's children went forth to the battles of the revolution.

Domestic education has a most important bearing upon the principles of our government and the stability of our institutions. The mother's influence is felt in every part of the state. Upon her the feeble infant relies for its natural support; but its spirit is equally helpless, and rests upon hers, while her purest affections overshadow and protect it. If those affections are depraved, what germs of wickedness and misery is she implanting in that tender heart. But if her spirit is pure and true, and she directs that infant mind in ways of gentleness and peace, enforcing the principles of obedience, of truth and of love, the child will ever be found upon the side of right, and ready to support the true principles of government. Of such children the mother—and our country as our common mother—may well exclaim with the Roman matron, "these are my jewels."

A late writer has entered into an ingenious discussion

of the effect of infant literature upon national character. The subject has more significancy than would be supposed at the first impression, for he insists, that whatever may be the common tendency among a people, it is sure to be consciously or unconsciously assumed and prescribed as the pattern for the young. Thus in England the books for children exhibit a devotion to material objects and social distinctions, national antipathies and religious intolerance; in France, monstrous national conceit, admiration of military renown, and love of theatrical effect; in Germany, misty abstractions, and unprofitable sensibility. Now, in America, as well as in England, to which this writer more particularly refers, the character of most of the children's books, that have been published during the last quarter of a century, is fairly typified in the name of Peter Parley, which the writers of some hundreds of them have assumed. These books have been addressed almost entirely to the cultivation of the understanding. The many tales sung or said from time immemorial, which have travelled from the remotest climes, and found acceptance among people in every stage of culture, which with some slight change of costume or of incident have been adopted into every tongue, and which appeal to the other and certainly not less important elements of a young child's mind, its fancy, imagination, sympathies, affections, are almost all gone out of memory. Nothing is considered valuable unless it contain some fact, or can advance the child in actual knowledge. Thus, the constant effort is to enlarge the understand-

ing, without any regard to the affections. Nor is the child suffered to take his own course. Artificial stimulants are applied, and his intellectual activity is kept on a constant stretch by the effort made to cram him with knowledge, so that the schoolmaster, instead of kindly assisting in the natural and orderly developement of all the faculties, is degraded into a sort of intellectual sausage-maker; and the materials sometimes used in either occupation are equally indigestible. In behalf of little children who are thus stuffed to the skin, one is tempted to interpose the shield of Mother Goose, and exclaim:

All work and no play
Makes Jack a dull boy!

The same general principle is observable in the higher systems of education with us. The classics, which appeal to the more generous sentiments of our nature, are giving place to the natural sciences, mathematical investigations and other kindred studies, which may be applied to some practical use; and these seminaries bid fair to be schools for the education of engineers rather than of scholars. Moral science seems to have fallen into complete neglect within their walls. Consider, too, the little consideration in which the fine arts, painting, poetry, sculpture and music are held in our country; and the little esteem we have for men who have devoted themselves to these pursuits, regarding all as useless members of society, who do not contribute something to the gratification of the intellectual or physical wants of man.

So, too, in the commercial world, the age is remarkable for the same intellectual activity. It is the age of canals and rail-roads and steam-ships. Never was commercial enterprise more active. Never were the whole energies of man so engrossed by the cares of life. How we labor; how we toil! Thrift, thrift, is the universal cry; and our success is commensurate with our exertions, whilst there is danger that a sordid selfishness will assert supreme control over minds so intent upon gain.

Are not these considerations sufficient to show, that the present age, with us at least, is one of intellectual rather than moral greatness—of a selfish calculating policy, rather than manly self-denial—of expediency rather than heroism. In such an age the distinction between right and wrong will not be very clearly defined either in public or private affairs, and acts of meanness and villany will find ready defenders.

It is evident, that a spirit of this sort is at war with a wholesome administration of the laws, and those who administer the laws will be especial objects of mistrust and jealousy. The judiciary is in its very nature opposed to any doctrine of mere expediency. It is the dispenser of justice, the representative of right. It cannot bend to the popular voice; it is deaf to the clamors of the mob. The framers of our government desired to place it in this very position. To secure this it was necessary, first, that sufficient compensation should be given to induce the ablest men to ascend the bench, and, second, that they should be protected from being

attacked by any other branch of the government. In almost every state, assaults have been made upon the judiciary, and wherever they have been successful, the result has exhibited the wisdom of those who wished to throw around the bench every possible protection. In Massachusetts we have lately seen most able and eminent men descend from the bench, because their position was no longer safe from attack. I do not mean on this occasion to touch any chords of a party character; but no considerations of political expediency shall prevent me from saying here, that the moral influence of such a fact is in the highest degree alarming. It were better that petty politicians and their wretched schemes should be swept from the earth, than that such an act should go forth among the people as the settled policy of the state.

One of the most significant facts in relation to society at the present day, is the indisposition to personal responsibility which is everywhere exhibited. Men scarcely venture to go alone. Their individuality seems to be lost. They act and are acted upon in masses. Every one is attached to some party or sect with whom he acts in concert, and to whose principles he refers every new question that may arise. Now, this tendency has existed in some form in all ages. In the earlier periods of history, the people were never disposed to very great individuality of character; they wished for others to judge for them; and, in the patriarchal forms of government, the people leaned on their rulers for guidance, and were glad to be relieved of

responsibility. With us every man is compelled to act in the various events of the day, but there is a constant tendency or wish to shift the responsibility of independent action from himself to others. It may be from this feeling, that so many moral associations have grown up among us; and the effect of these associations upon individual character in a republic is deserving of serious inquiry, because every influence that tends to diminish the feeling of personal responsibility, is apparently opposed to that strength of mind and integrity of character, which are essential to the public and the private station. I dare not assert that the principle of association for moral purposes necessarily involves any such consequence, for this would be calling in question the authority and necessity of the church in one form, and the state in another. Indeed, there are principles of association which directly strengthen personal character, and contribute to the individual as well as the general freedom. An exception may also be made at the outset as to those associations, of which the object is the improvement of the individual members, or the mutual restraint and reform of each other. Reference is here made to those associations exclusively, wherein the object proposed is the removal of some particular evil, not immediately affecting those engaged in the operation, or where the tendency is to diminish the spiritual freedom of those brought within their influence.

In the business world the tendency is to the accumulation of wealth for particular purposes, which may be

more easily attained by a union of different persons, than by the single and divided efforts of each. Accordingly corporations have increased to an extent unparalleled in commercial history. The evils attendant upon them are quite obvious, especially the tendency to diminish the feeling of personal responsibility; although the good is supposed to more than counterbalance this objection. But when this sort of machinery is made use of to accomplish moral purposes, a different result may be anticipated. The object of these associations being to accomplish a particular purpose in the shortest possible time, they sometimes construct a sort of moral rail-road to a given point without any regard to the rights of intervening proprietors, here, passing over the highway and endangering the lives of unwary travellers, there, destroying a house, and now rushing through a churchyard, disturbing the bones of our fathers rather than deviate from the most direct and feasible route. When the work is completed, an emphatic warning is given for all to clear the track, while the great moral machine is on its way. But the parallel fails in a most important particular. Moral corporations are not obliged to apply to the lawmaking power for a charter, nor are they responsible for the injury they inflict on the rights of others; and if they were, it is doubtful whether the capital invested in them would be sufficient to afford any adequate remuneration.

They who are thus united in a crusade against some particular evil, are often blind to others of a greater

magnitude, which grow out of the very measures they adopt. Resorting to a sort of mechanical process to accomplish their ends, a rigid discipline is inculcated, and every man yields up to the general voice his own ideas of propriety. Moral questions are determined by a majority of votes, and there is a sort of general conscience, which, like a corporate seal, may be affixed to any measure that receives the approbation of the directors. Personal identity is thus to a certain extent lost; individual freedom is surrendered, and the standard of morality brought so low, that men will consent to and assist in performing acts as members that they would refuse to do as individuals.

The influence of these principles upon female character is still more remarkable. When woman oversteps the modesty of her position, and enters upon the career of moral reform, her whole character seems to undergo a change.

> Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible,
> Thou, stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.

And in these assemblies, which are composed of neither men nor angels, the expressions of a nervous historical writer are brought to mind, for there is nourished and trained a keen, pugnacious spirit, an unbridled license of tongue, of which the influence is speedily felt, in the serious disturbance of domestic happiness, and even of the public peace. Sober mothers and sedate maiden ladies are transformed into a synod of slanderous praters, whose inquisitorial deliberations and audacious decrees instil their venom into

the innermost recesses of society, and the whole community is sometimes inflamed and distracted by the effervescence of female spleen and presumption.

Nor is this all. It has been the fate of such organizations to become subject to the control of unprincipled leaders, who apply an artificial stimulus to all the operations, by means of elaborate reports, and pompous statistics of the good already accomplished, set off with gloomy accounts of the great work yet unperformed, and the feebleness of the means to the end. A feeling of intense pride and self conceit is engendered, and the most violent anathemas are hurled at all who stand in the way of their operations. To doubt is to be denounced; to hesitate is to be trampled in the dust. Magnets may be so joined that their union developes new power, and together they exert more than the sum of their individual influence; and so, when men are affected with any species of enthusiasm, it is immensely increased by union, while the whole body has only the restraint of one man's reason.

These remarks apply in some measure to the organization of political parties. I do not deprecate party spirit as the worst of evils. In a form of government like our own, it is necessary that political principles should be earnestly discussed, and the claims of candidates thoroughly canvassed; and this may be done with zeal, energy, enthusiasm, and yet the kindest feelings preserved. I have no sympathy with those who are continually lamenting the party spirit of our day, and at the same time join themselves to other organ-

izations, in which it is easier to obtain power and influence. There are always disappointed men, who constantly complain of party discipline, without lifting a finger to improve it. Too selfish to devote their time to accomplish a reform, they are contented with sounding a perpetual note of alarm. Too feeble to lead, and too proud to serve, they watch with an impatient eye the movements of others, but are always ready to accept of favors from either side. Nor do I believe that party spirit is so extensively felt, and party organizations so strict, as is generally supposed. On this point we are liable to be deceived by appearances. Active politicians, partisan leaders, are comparatively few, although they usually make the noise of many. To hear their harangues on the eve of an election, one would suppose that the fable of Chicken Little was about to become a truth, and that the sky was actually falling; and so from the statements in party newspapers we often seem to be on the eve of a revolution; but the great mass of the people in reality take very little interest in the matter. "Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern," says Burke, "make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shade, chew the cud and are silent, do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the fields; that they are, of course, many in number, or that after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour."

It is also to be taken into the account, that selfish

party politicians operate as a check upon each other. The *ins* are exerting all their strength to keep in, and the *outs* are doing all they can to get in; meanwhile sober and industrious citizens are ordinarily too much occupied with their own practical concerns to give much attention to either, and I apprehend more danger from this indifference to politics on the part of the people, than from the excess of party spirit. They who are familiar with election returns are aware, that most great political revolutions are effected, not so much by the change of opinion among those who ordinarily exercise the elective franchise, as by the votes of those who do not usually perform this duty. There is in this country an immense reserved corps of voters, who only come out upon extraordinary occasions; and so far as party discipline tends to bring out these voters, it is a positive good, and they who, from good motives, engage in political organizations of this sort are really entitled to great credit.

Infinitely more danger is to be apprehended from those organizations, which involve the consideration of great moral questions, which are hurrying forward with a zeal that knows no reason, and an enthusiasm that cannot be restrained. The doctrine is practically maintained, that men may do acts as a society for the accomplishment of a good object, which it would not be lawful for them to do as individuals.

Such a principle as this is dangerous to the state; it is disorganizing in its tendency, and destructive of all true freedom. An association founded upon such a

principle is in effect a moral mob—a conspiracy upon the rights and happiness of the people. What is a riot more than this? Here, if the end will justify the means, if men in a society may do what it would not be right for them to do as individuals, a perfect defence is made out; for there has hardly been a riot within the memory of man, where the end proposed was not regarded by those engaged in it as plausible and just. What is a riot but the joining together of men to accomplish some good object in a less space of time than it could otherwise be effected; to hasten that which the laws will too slowly reach;[1] to act in aid of divine justice in the punishment of some crime, or attempt, (to borrow a daring German expression) to grind down the gaps in the sword of Almighty justice?

It will be found that the riots of our day differ in an important particular from those of an earlier date, and the fact is remarkable as tending to show, that these lawless outbreaks are only the external and gross manifestation of the principles advocated by other associations. They are no longer the sudden ebulitions of

[1] Even well regulated minds sometimes excuse a riot where the result appears to be good. When a murderer, for instance, is immediately hanged by Lynch law, they regret the act but find consolation in the fact that the punishment was well deserved. But is the violation of law in reality any the less gross? Is not the danger increased when a riot is justified by any reasoning whatever? In Coxe's Memoirs of the Pelham administration, (vol. 1, p. 448) there is a letter from Pelham to his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, in which he quotes the following remark of Algernon Sidney, the night before his execution; "Nephew, I value not my own life a chip, but what concerns me is, that the law which takes away my life, may hang every one of you whenever it is thought convenient."

passion and rage, rushing forward without aim or end, and rendered comparatively harmless by the want of system and skilful directors; but they have become organized bodies, with conspicuous leaders, and with plans deliberately made. They go forward to the accomplishment of their object with a coolness and deliberation, that wins for them, in some instances, the title of respectability. We sometimes hear of a mob of gentlemen—a quiet assemblage—a peaceable gathering, which calmly accomplished its objects and then dispersed. We read of courts regularly conducted to try culprits by Lynch law; and a tribunal of this sort which orders the burning of a negro, or the public whipping of a thief, or the expulsion of gamblers from a town, or the destruction of a newspaper press, is not seldom praised, by implication at least, for the order and regularity of its proceedings.

Now, what more is this than the outward manifestation of principles which have their growth on another soil? I do not hesitate to assert, that doctrines have recently been openly avowed in New England and defended with no little zeal and ingenuity, before assemblages of both sexes, which tend directly to a breach of the peace, and which for intense radicalism, a coarseness and brutality of expression, and an utter contempt for social order, were never exceeded by leaders of Parisian mobs in the darkest days of the French revolution. In religious assemblies, or at least those which were attended by the forms of christianity, which were opened and closed by prayer, the ravings

of infidelity have had free course—the Bible has been criticised in the most impious terms, the name and attributes of God blasphemed, all laws openly denounced, and the social system attacked with coarse and vulger vituperation. Nor is this all. Deliberate attempts have been made to resist the administration of the laws, and direct appeals made to the people for this purpose. The pulpit has undertaken to control the judiciary, and from the sacred desk a doctrine has been preached, of which the direct tendency is to undermine the moral sense of the people as to the obligation of an oath to support the constitution.

These are not the insane ravings of ignorant and depraved citizens; but they are the doctrines of educated men, of those whose abilities and standing in society give an influence to their opinions. How can we wonder at the violations of law, the riots, the murders that are borne to our ears on every breeze, when such doctrines are promulgated in religious assemblies, preached from the pulpit and sent through the press to every family in the nation?

For gross breaches of the peace the laws, in theory at least, afford a remedy and prescribe a punishment; but what human tribunal can reach those who are in reality responsible for these outrages? The deluded and excited multitude, whose hands commit the overt acts, are not in truth the most guilty in these affairs; but it is he who has infused the poison into the public heart—the scholar, whose mind is enriched by ancient lore and modern science, and who in his quiet

study, surrounded by all the blandishments of literature and art, sends out among the people, with whom he has no personal sympathy, his detestable doctrines. He does not soil his hands by personal contact with the masses. He resorts to no force. He denounces all force. He would scorn to place himself at the head of a mob. But it is he who sends them forth on their errand of death; and in heaven's chancery it is recorded against him. He escapes the punishment of human laws, and is it strange that those also generally escape who are immediately engaged in the work? When, when have those concerned in any riot of magnitude been adequately punished?

It cannot be denied, that there is a low state of public morals on this subject in every part of our country. After the occurrence of any riot, there is abundance of regret that it should have happened, and an appearance of great indignation; but when any active measures for punishment or renumeration are attempted, how soon the ardor cools, and what a shuffling and disgraceful policy is adopted, even by sovereign states!

Massachusetts has within her borders a standing monument of her shame. But there are some instances of manly integrity and public virtue in her early history—of an elevated and far reaching policy—to which her citizens may point with pride and hope. They are worthy of consideration on this occasion, especially as the outbreaks just prior to the revolution have been alluded to as giving a sanction to modern riots.

The period immediately preceding the revolution was

one of excitement and constant alarm. The citizens were oppressed in a manner that led of necessity to a war of resistance. The whole history of that time exhibits uncommon patience and forbearance on the part of the people, and it was not until patience ceased to be a virtue, when it was found that the king was determined to persevere in his tyrannical acts, that their loyalty began to yield. The passage of the stamp act, by a vote of 294 to 49, made it evident that a hope of justice could no longer be indulged. Independence does not seem to have been aimed at even then. The people hoped, by a vigorous opposition to this measure, to maintain their rights in peace; but when the distributor of stamps was actually appointed in Boston, the excitement in the town was beyond all precedent, and, for a moment, reason was driven from her throne. The office of the stamp distributor was torn down, his house attacked, and he was compelled to resign the office; and while the people were in a state of turmoil and excitement, a person arrived from England with evidence that Hutchinson, the lieutenant-governor and chief justice of the province, had formerly written home in favor of this odious act. The public mind was in that state when only a spark was needed to kindle a conflagration. The house of the chief justice was attacked—himself and family obliged to fly—his papers burned—his property destroyed, and nothing but the blackened walls left standing to tell the story of lawless violence. Such was the first important riot of the revolution. If ever a resort to violence could be extenuated or excused,

it was this—the outbreak of a people driven to desperation. But the men of that day had not learned the specious reasoning of more modern times. The law was regarded as sacred; public order was to be preserved at all events, and it is impossible to describe the horror and grief with which this whole affair was regarded.[1]

At the next meeting of the general court, the question came up of compensation for the damages. The house expressed their disapprobation of the riot, but professed to entertain scruples as to their right to make any compensation, taking the ground, also, that the state could not be justly considered responsible for the acts of a few individuals, and thus by a feeble policy, they entrenched themselves behind a technical point. At the next session the subject was again agitated, and it was then referred to the towns, each of which were to vote on the subject, and the assembly had a recess in order to ascertain their will. The commonwealth was sound at the heart. The people were anxious to maintain a high ground in point of character, and

[1] A regular town meeting was immediately called, in Boston, at which James Otis was moderator, and it was voted unanimously that the town had an utter detestation of these extraordinary and violent proceedings, and that "the selectmen and magistrates of the town be desired to use their utmost endeavors agreeable to law, to suppress the like disorders for the future, and that the freeholders and other inhabitants will do every thing in their power to assist them therein. *Voted*, that the inhabitants of this town will be ready on all occasions to assist the selectmen and magistrates in the suppression of all disorders of a like nature that may happen when called upon for that purpose." Records of the town of Boston, vol. 4, page 668.

In a letter of the town to DeBerdt, the agent of the province in London, October 22, 1766, apparently drawn up by James Otis, they indignantly deny all knowledge of, or participation in these outrages, and refer to their former votes and to well known facts. Ibid, vol. 4, pages 723, 724.

to prove to the world, by the adoption of a manly policy, that they were worthy of respect and confidence. The representatives received their instructions, and full indemnity was ordered by a vote of 53 to 35. The amount paid was over three thousand pounds.[1]

Let it be remembered that this was at a period when the whole people were about breaking out into open resistance; that it was the deliberate opinion of this same assembly that the stamp act ought not to be enforced; that independence had begun to be openly advocated, and that the persons injured by this riot were

[1] The vote of the town of Boston on this question, was as follows:

The Town then took into consideration the Clause in the warrant, viz:— "To determine whether they will give their Representatives Instructions relative to a Reimbursement being made to those Gentlemen who suffered by the violences of Persons unknown in the month of August, 1765," when the following vote was passed unanimously.

Whereas the Inhabitants of this Town have ever held the violent outrages of Persons unknown in the late Times of distress in the utmost detestation and abhorrence, and from a sense of duty as well as just indignation at the ravages committed on the property of diverse of their Fellow Subjects and Citizens on the 26th of August 1765, took the earliest opportunity to exert their strenuous endeavors, in aid of the civil authority to restore peace, order and tranquillity; which were accordingly in one day restored and have been ever since preserved. And whereas his Majesty has been pleased *only* to *recommend* it to the General Assembly of this Province to make up the losses of the Sufferers in the late unhappy Times, although his Excellency the Governor has thought fit to *interpret* the same as a *Requisition* so *peremptory* and *authoritive* as to preclude not only all controversy and debate, but even deliberation with regard to a compliance. From no regard to said *interpretation*, but in dutiful respect to the mild recommendation of our most gracious Sovereign, in humanity and generosity towards those Gentlemen who have suffered in a manner that no man ought, especially in a state of civil society;

Voted, that on the application of such Sufferers to the General Assembly in a Parliamentary way, the Representatives of this Town be directed, and they are accordingly directed in their best discretion to use their influence, that such losses be made up as far as may be, in a manner the most loyal and respectful with regard to his Majesty, the most constitutional and safe with regard to our invaluable rights and privileges, and the most humane and benevolent with regard to the sufferers. Records of Boston, vol. 4, pp. 715—717.

generally obnoxious to the whole people; and, more than all, that the province, oppressed by taxes of its own, with an enfeebled commerce, and all their efforts paralyzed by political troubles, could ill afford to bear other burthens.[1]

The history of that mournful tragedy, known as the Boston Massacre, is full of evidence to show the soundness of our fathers on the subject under consideration. This painful occurrence arose out of a collision between the citizens of Boston and the British soldiers who had been stationed here. The act of quartering soldiers upon the town had been resented by the people from the first, and sagacious men had often predicted the difficulties which ensued. As early as May, 1761, a committee of the general court remonstrated to the governor, that an armament by sea and land, investing Boston, and a military guard with cannon pointed at the door of the state house, were inconsistent with that dignity and freedom with which they had a right to deliberate, consult and determine. In June of the same year the house passed resolves, by which they declared, among other things, that the establishment of a standing army in the colony, in time of peace, was an invasion of natural rights; that a standing army was not known as a part of the British constitution; and that sending an armed force into the colony under pretence

[1] One great difficulty in procuring an act of indemnity undoubtedly was the unpopularity of Hutchinson, and the tone of the governor on the subject. In the archives of the commonwealth there is a letter from DeBerdt, in which he hardly disguises his surprise that compensation was not immediately made.

of assisting the civil authority, was highly dangerous to the people, unprecedented and unconstitutional. The policy of the government was not changed, however, and the natural consequences of quartering a foreign soldiery upon an unwilling and spirited people were soon apparent, first in the excited and bitter complaints of the whole province, and then in direct collisions between the soldiers and the citizens, until at length, on the memorable fifth of March, 1770, an attack was made by a mob on the sentinel who was stationed before the custom house.[1] The soldier loaded his gun and retreated up the steps as far as he could, and then shouted for protection. A corporal and six privates were sent to his relief, who, after being grossly insulted and attacked, fired upon the crowd. Three men were instantly killed, five were dangerously wounded, and a few slightly. It is impossible to describe the excitement which this event occasioned. The whole people of Massachusetts were wrought to the highest pitch of rage and indignation. The populace breathed only vengeance, and even minds better instructed were entirely carried away at the sight of the blood of citizens, slain by a foreign soldiery. The excitement was increased by the pomp and ceremony of the funeral rites, and by an account of the transaction published by the

[1] The custom house stood at the corner of State and Exchange (then Royal Exchange lane) streets, on the spot where the Union Bank building now stands. On the opposite corner of Exchange street the Royal Exchange Tavern stood. The main guard was regularly stationed near the head of State (then King) street, directly opposite the door on the south side of the old state house (then called the town house.) The twenty-ninth regiment was quartered in Water and Atkinson streets.

town, which differed widely from the facts as subsequently proved.[1]

The soldiers were immediately arrested, and their trial for murder took place under a pressure of excitement, indignation and prejudice, at which the stoutest heart must quail. But among the friends of freedom there were men who viewed this matter in the light of truth and reason, and who earnestly desired that justice should not fall a sacrifice in her own temple. John Adams and Josiah Quincy, jr. undertook the defence of the prisoners. They were both young men and popular leaders. Their influence was great with the people, and it was rapidly increasing. They were ardent and uncompromising friends of freedom, and opponents of the whole course of the mother country. In consenting to defend the soldiers they acted contrary to their own interests, and incurred the disapprobation of those whose favor they were naturally anxious to preserve. "My dear son"—wrote the aged

[1] "A short narrative of the horrid massacre in Boston, perpetrated in the evening of the fifth of March, 1770, by soldiers of the 29th regiment; which with the 14th regiment were quartered there; with some observations on the state of things prior to that catastrophe. Printed by order of the town of Boston, and sold by Edes & Gill, in Queen street, and T. & J. Fleet, in Cornhill, 1770." This publication was intended principally for the English market, and the work was sent there by a vessel hired by the town for the purpose. The funeral solemnities of those who were killed were conducted with great pomp and splendor. Crispus Attucks, a mulatto, and James Caldwell, who were strangers in Boston, were borne from Faneuil Hall, Samuel Maverick, a youth of seventeen, from his mother's house in Union street, and Samuel Gray, from his brother's in Royal Exchange lane. The four hearses formed a junction in King street, at the place where the deceased fell, and thence an immense procession marched in columns of six deep through the main street to the central burying ground, where the four bodies were deposited in one tomb, amidst the solemn tolling of all the bells in Boston and the neighboring towns.

father of Quincy—"I am under great affliction at hearing the bitterest reproaches uttered against you, for having become an advocate for those criminals who are charged with the murder of their fellow citizens. Good God! Is it possible? I will not believe it." "These men," was the noble answer, "are entitled by the laws of God and man to all legal counsel and aid." . . . . "You and this whole people will one day rejoice that I became their advocate." . . . . "There are honest men in all sects—I wish their approbation; —there are wicked bigots in all parties, I abhor them."

Under these circumstances the trial of the soldiers took place, and never were prisoners defended with greater zeal and enthusiasm than were these by the young advocates, who were sacrificing their own feelings to principle, and their future prospects to a sense of justice. They took the high and manly ground that the attack on the soldiers was a lawless outbreak—a riot—and that they had a right to take life in self-defence; and here in the town of Boston, on the eve of a revolution, in the midst of an excitement unparalleled in history, were the true principles of justice advocated, and the sound doctrines of law and order proclaimed. "The cause of liberty"—Quincy exclaimed at the trial, in the language of the Farmer of Pennsylvania,[1] "is a cause of too much dignity to be sullied

[1] The celebrated "Farmer's Letters" were written against the revenue acts of Great Britain, by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania. The depths of research, force of argument, and perspicuity of style, which appeared in these letters, made them popular with all classes of readers in America. Dr. Franklin caused them to be reprinted in England, with a commendatory preface from his own pen. Sparks's Life of Franklin, p. 456.

by turbulence and tumult; it ought to be maintained in a manner suitable to her nature. Those who engage in it should breathe a sedate yet fervent spirit, animating them to actions of prudence, justice, moderation, bravery, humanity and magnanimity." "The law," said John Adams, at the close of his masterly appeal to the jury—"in all vicissitudes of government, fluctuations of the passions, or flights of enthusiasm, will preserve a steady undeviating course; it will not bend to the uncertain wishes, imaginations and wanton tempers of men." . . . . "On the one hand, it is inexorable to the cries and lamentations of the prisoners; on the other, it is deaf, deaf as an adder, to the clamors of the populace."

The appeal was not unsuccessful. Justice triumphed. The soldiers were all acquitted with the exception of two, and those two were convicted of a less offence, for which the punishment was merely nominal.[1]

Those who sacrifice their lives for their country are held in dear remembrance by all succeeding ages. Leonidas and his band will live as long as the fame of Sparta. The Roman Curtius survives the forum which he died to save. The soldier who bares his breast to the invader's weapon, receives the highest honors of his country while living, and her benediction after he is dead. But infinitely higher in the scale of moral excellence is the place assigned to those, who dare to defend an enemy from injustice, and, rising above the

[1] They prayed the benefit of clergy, which was allowed them, and thereupon they were each burnt in the hand, in open court, and were discharged.

temporary excitements of the day, are willing to sacrifice ambitious dreams, the hopes of worldly success, the approbation of friends, and all that man holds dear as a citizen, in the cause of truth and justice. The story of our revolution is full of self-sacrifices, of toils, of disheartening struggles. But there is no single act recorded in its history which exhibits more true magnanimity, more Roman integrity, or greater devotion to principle, than the defence of the British soldiers by John Adams and Josiah Quincy, jr.

Josiah Quincy, jr.!—What associations are connected with that familiar name! That devoted patriot, whose liquid tones and fervid eloquence so charmed and delighted the multitude—whose truth and sincerity were never questioned—whose character was tainted by nothing for his descendants to regret. Just springing into active life—devoting himself to his country, and entering into her service with all the energies of his great heart, he was called to another scene of existence, "dying within sight of that beloved country which he was not permitted to reach. He expired not as a few weeks afterwards did his friend and copatriot Warren, in battle, on a field ever memorable and ever glorious, but in solitude, amidst suffering, without associate, and without witness; yet breathing forth a dying wish for his country, desiring to live only to perform towards her a last and signal service." But his name still lives with us; his blood still flows in the veins of honored men, who hold the character and fame of their ancestor as a sacred trust. May that

name ever hold its place in the affections of our countrymen; never may it be stained by weakness or folly; never may those who bear it yield to the clamors of a mob, or be found wanting in the defence of liberty and law.

John Adams!—He in whose arms was cradled the infant revolution. Who early saw the necessity of independence, and who, with an impetuosity that knew no restraint—with an energy that could not be repressed, threw himself into the front of the contest, and, in the face of doubting friends and bitter foes, fearlessly avowed his determination to survive or perish with his country, in the glorious struggle that was approaching. Long years of honor and happiness were his. Long did he live to witness the success he had predicted, and on this day—the birth-day of the nation—he peacefully left the scene of his struggles and his triumphs. He, too, has left a son, who does not hesitate to contend for principle, who does not fear to oppose his own friends when they wish to do a wrong. Long may he be spared to a nation which needs his services—to a people who appreciate his character. Long may he stand where he now stands, the representative of freemen, the friend of just principles, the denouncer of tyranny in all its forms, the advocate of freedom, such as his father contended for, of freedom to all—the unflinching defender of that Saxon bulwark, the right of petition. When the waves of popular commotion run mountain high, when anarchy, misrule and faction threaten all that is sacred, there may the son of John Adams stand,

—that old man eloquent—breasting the fury of the storm, like Atlas firm—

> While storms and tempests thunder on its brow
> And oceans break their billows at its feet.

A comparison of the present and past conditions of our country, and the character of the people, gives rise to the most serious reflections. In all that relates to our physical condition, in wealth, in population and in power, how infinitely superior to what we were at the close of the revolution! How brilliant the prospect before us! But in moral character, in public and private virtue, in national faith and honor, is there not equal reason for humiliation and alarm? Look for a moment at the statesmen of that day. Consider the administration of Washington, rising from the midst of confusion and misrule in the imposing grandeur of that great name, and overshadowing all subsequent times, offering to the world an example of moderation and virtue, the sublime spectacle of a government founded on the consent of the governed; and then reflect on our present condition, the only great christian slave-holding power, with the faith and honor of nearly one-fourth of the Union sunk under a mass of extravagance and folly, with feeble men at the head of affairs; refusing to pay the debts of our own states, but proposing to assume those of a neighbor, and encouraged to enter upon a career of violence and conquest, in defence of a system of wrong and oppression, which must inevitably draw down upon us the scorn and execration of

mankind. Compare the first congress under the constitution—an assemblage of great and virtuous statesmen, deliberating with earnestness and zeal upon the grand principles of free institutions—compare the conduct of this grave and dignified body with the scenes of violence, and the total neglect of business, which have been exhibited to the present generation.

One of the most exciting events in English history is the expulsion of the house of commons by the iron hand of Cromwell.[1] We fear no such act of arbitrary power; we desire no such scene of violence; but could virtue, with justice as her handmaid, sit enthroned in our capitol, would not her pure and mild influence drive from those halls a portion of the men who now rule the destinies of this people?

But the most discouraging aspect of the times is the indifference with which these things are viewed, or rather the efforts made to persuade us that they do not exist. We turn with disgust and abhorrence from the gross adulation and homage rendered to despots in other countries; but is there not a similar spirit exhibited here towards the people, who are themselves the sovereign? That the king can do no wrong is a legal fiction in England; that the people can do no

[1] After having listened to the debate until his patience was exhausted, the protector suddenly started up and loaded the parliament with the vilest reproaches for their tyranny, ambition, oppression and robbery of the public. Then stamping with his foot, which was a signal for the soldiers to enter, he exclaimed in a loud voice, "For shame, get you gone; give place to honester men; to those who will more faithfully discharge their trust. You are no longer a parliament. The Lord has done with you: he has chosen other instruments for carrying on his work." Hume's History of England.

wrong is getting to be considered a moral fact in America. The constant aim of the demagogue is to flatter the people, to convince them that what they choose to do is necessarily right. And this is repeated so often, and in such different forms, that the dulled appetite calls for yet grosser adulation. To flatter the people; to obey in all things their wishes; to preach to them their own infallibility,

> And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
> Where thrift may follow fawning—

are the highest arts of the demagogue; and it is a mortifying truth, that his success is often commensurate with his exertions in this direction. It is an equally significant, and perhaps a more alarming fact, that the same deference to the will of the people is infusing itself into the church; and a holiday faith, built on man's own infallibility, commends itself to his vanity; while the dignity of his nature, rather than his weakness and his wants, is a popular theme from the pulpit.

These are gloomy reflections. But they need not disturb our faith in our government. They are evils which exist independent of the government; they are a departure from the principles established by our fathers.

I have faith in the perpetuity of our institutions, because I believe they have been established, in the order of divine providence, for the regeneration and happiness of the people, and I do not suppose God ever undertakes to make himself wiser by experiments. I have confidence in man's capacity for self-government, not because I have faith in humanity, weak, blind and

frail as it is, but because I have faith in God, that he will support those in the greatest possible freedom, who live in obedience to the laws of order which emanate from himself. For if there is any truth in history; if the experience of all ages points to any great central truth, it is, that liberty and virtue go hand in hand, and that free institutions can only be maintained by those who live in simple obedience to the truth.

The motives to moral action press upon the American citizen with unusual force at the present time. Upon us the hopes of man are resting in every part of the world. Wherever humanity toils for a scanty subsistence; wherever the iron heel of oppression falls upon the people; wherever the last hope of liberty is dead—

——— From the burning plains
Where Lybian monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless climes,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the sky—

"the voices of the past and the future seem to blend in one sound of warning and entreaty, addressing itself not only to the general but to the individual ear, calling upon us, each and all, to be faithful to the trust which God has committed to our hands."

Let the American citizen feel the responsibilities of his position, with a determination that the hopes of the world shall not be disappointed. Nor let him mistake the nature of his duties. Many men acknowledge our

evils and our dangers, but seek in vain for the remedy. They are ready for any sacrifice, but earnestly inquire when and where it is to be made. We eagerly seize upon any excuse for the non-performance of duty. "Give me where to stand," cried the ancient philosopher, "and I will move the world." "Find where to stand," shouts the modern reformer. "Stand where you are," is the voice of reason and religion. It is not upon some great and distant enterprize that our duty will call us. It is not in the tented field that our services will be needed. The battle ground is in our own hearts; the enemy in our own bosoms. And when the passions of men are subdued, when selfishness is purged from humanity, when lust ceases to burn, when anger is entirely restrained, when jealousy, hatred and revenge are unknown, then, and then only, is the victory won.

Let no man merge his identity in the masses, nor forget his individual responsibility to his country and his God. Is his position lowly and obscure, let him remember that every one exerts an influence, for good or for evil, and no one is so humble as not to need the protection of a good government. Is he called to places of responsibility and trust, let him bear his honors meekly but firmly, yielding nothing to the blandishments of power, or the acclamations of the multitude. He may be hurled from his station by those who placed him in it, and the voices of praise, which were once sweet music to his ears, may be changed to execrations. Let him lay down his power in dignity and

silence; as he has filled a high place without pride, he may fill a low one without humiliation. And if, in the performance of duty, sterner trials await him; if misrule and lawless faction should select him as a victim, let him calmly die, remembering that the best and the bravest—earth's noblest children—have drunk the cup of degradation to the dregs, and better men than he have been sacrificed by popular violence. In whatever position he may be placed; wherever his lot may be cast, let him maintain the integrity of his soul.

> This above all,—To thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

NOTE TO PAGE 37.

A FULL account of the riot in which the property of Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson was destroyed, and of the Act of Indemnity, is given in his history of Massachusetts; but as he naturally had much feeling upon the subject of which he wrote, it is fortunate that nearly all of the original papers relating to the affair are preserved in the archives of the commonwealth, from which, with Hutchinson's work, a correct account may be derived. On the day after the riot, the Lieutenant-Governor applied to the Governor and Council, and a Committee was immediately appointed, who made an estimate of his loss (which is still preserved) amounting to more than three thousand pounds. It appears that the Lieutenant-Governor, being a servant of the Crown, had declined applying, in the first instance, to the general court, for compensation as an act of favor, not knowing the pleasure of the King or the mind of his ministers, and upon a representation to the secretary of state of his case, rested altogether upon the measures which might be judged the most proper for obtaining it. When the matter came before the house, there was much complaint at this proceeding, as being an unparliamentary course; and the town of Boston, in the vote which was taken on the subject, clearly intimated that a proper application should be made *to the assembly*, as a condition of their representatives voting for indemnity. Accordingly, Hutchinson sent in a petition to the "Governor, Council and House of Representatives," which is still preserved. It is dated October 29th, 1766, and sets forth, that on the evening of the 15th of August, 1765, a number of persons unknown beset his house, and required satisfaction that he had not encouraged the passing of the Stamp Act, but were persuaded to leave by the advice of several reputable inhabitants, having done no other damage than breaking some of the windows;—that the petitioner had in fact endeavored to prevent the passing of the Act; that on the evening of the 26th of the same month, "a much greater number of persons unknown, with all the rage and fury imaginable, suddenly, with axes, clubs and other instruments, burst or broke

open the doors and windows of the dwelling-house aforesaid, dispersed through every part of the house, destroyed the furniture, carried away the wearing apparel, books, papers, money and effects of every sort, belonging to your Petitioner and his family (a small part of the kitchen furniture only excepted) and continued from between eight and nine of the clock in the evening until after four the next morning, ruining the house, outhouses, fences, gardens, &c., and threatening destruction to all who should oppose or interrupt them." That he represented the case the next day to the Governor in Council, and a committee, appointed to estimate the loss, reported it to amount to £3168 17*s.* 9*d.* of which sum he had received about £30 and no more; that the Governor at the next session laid the matter before the house; that the house were pleased to observe that the application had not been made in a parliamentary way; that the petitioner, being a servant of the crown, had deemed it decent and in character to lay the matter first before the governor, but would have then preferred the petition to the three branches of the Legislature, if he had known that it would have been thought necessary; that the petitioner, as soon as it came to his knowledge that an application in such a manner was judged by the house to be necessary, determined to conform thereto, and now prayed that a compensation might be made him for his great losses and sufferings aforesaid. "And he begs leave further to represent, that exclusive of that pain and distress of mind which he is unable to describe, arising from this most injurious, barbarous treatment, he has been deprived above fourteen months of the use of this great part of his substance, and he with his family have been subjected to many inconveniences, difficulties and extraordinary charges, he therefore hopes and prays for a favorable consideration of his case in all its circumstances."

There was great opposition to making any compensation whatsoever, and the difficulty was very much increased by the course of the Governor and the unpopularity of Hutchinson. But the friends of the province, in England, were strongly of the opinion that the character of the people would suffer inconceivably in the eyes of the world, if compensation was not made to the fullest extent. The King also recommended it, and the people were not slow in perceiving that they could only hope to maintain their rights and receive the sympathy and support of christendom by a high and manly policy, founded upon the principles of justice; and although the assembly doubted their right to vote away money for this purpose, when it was referred to the people, the towns recommended it, and the act passed accordingly by a vote of 53 to 35. But they passed a resolve at the same time, that they "were influenced by a loyal and grateful regard to his majesty's most mild and gracious recommendation, by a deference to the opinion of the illustrious patrons of the colonies in Great Britain, and by a regard to internal peace and order, without respect to any interpretation of his Majesty's recommendation into a requisition precluding all debate and controversy, and with full persuasion that the sufferers had no just claim or demand on the province; and that this compliance ought not hereafter to be drawn into a precedent."

The act provided that there be "granted and paid out of the treasury of the province, to the Honorable Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., the sum of three thousand, one hundred and ninety-four pounds, seventeen shillings and six pence,

in full compensation for the losses and sufferings, that he and the several persons in his family had sustained in the late times of confusion.

To the Honorable Andrew Oliver, Esq., the sum of one hundred and seventy-two pounds, four shillings.

To Benjamin Hallowell, Jun., Esq., the sum of three hundred eighty-five pounds, six shillings and ten pence.

To William Storey, Esq., the sum of sixty-seven pounds, eight shillings and ten pence, in full compensation for their losses and sufferings in the late times of confusion."

Among the papers there is a statement by Hutchinson of his losses, in a long and very curious document, covering twenty-one closely written pages.

The act contained the usual provisions for a free pardon of all engaged in the riot, and to all other persons who had been guilty of any crimes, occasioned by the late troubles. The act was approved by the Governor, but when laid before the King it was disapproved, on account of the last named provision. But the money was paid before the news arrived, and nothing further passed upon the subject.

It is probable that the proceedings on this subject may suggest an inquiry as to the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor. But the two transactions seem to be clearly distinguishable in this, that the destruction of the tea was immediately on the eve of the revolution, when independence was openly advocated, and the country had begun to organize. But in point of fact, the question of compensation was here agitated, and it is not improbable that it would have been made, if the crisis in affairs had been delayed a few years longer.

When Hutchinson sailed for England, June 1, 1774, he says there were great expectations in the friends of Government, that a sufficient sum would be raised for payment of the tea, if not by a vote of the town, by subscriptions of private merchants and others. In the Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News Letter, of June 9, 1774, there is an address from Lewis Deblois, Martin Gay, Theophilus Lillie, Alexander Brimmer, James Perkins, Henry Lee, Thomas Amory, Harrison Gray, Philip Dumaresq, Richard Lechmere, and one hundred and seventeen others, to Governor Gage, in which they express a hope that his endeavors to promote the peace and tranquillity of the province may meet with success, and make the following singular statement in relation to the destruction of the tea: "Making restitution to the East India Company for damage done to their property, and for damage done to the persons and property of individuals among us by the outrage of rash and inconsiderate men, we look upon to be quite equitable, and we who have ever disavowed all lawless violences do bear our testimony against them, and particularly against that action which we suppose to be the immediate cause of our heavy chastisement, are willing to pay our proportions whenever the same can be ascertained, and the mode of levying it determined on." In his answer Governor Gage said: "It is greatly to be wished for the good of the community in general, that those in whose hands power is vested should use the most speedy methods to fulfil the King's expectation, and fix the mode to indemnify the East India Company, and others who have suffered, which could not fail to extricate the citizens of Boston out of the

difficulties, in which they are involved, with as little delay as the nature of them will admit, and lay a foundation for that harmony between Great Britain and the colony which every considerate and good man must wish to see established; and nothing shall be wanting on my part to accomplish an end so desirable."

In the same paper there is an extract of a letter from "a gentleman of the Committee in New York, dated 26th May, 1774," in which he says: "I am glad to find your people disposed for moderation, and indeed if the sentiments of your neighboring colonies are of weight, they will not hesitate to make suitable reparation and come to the best terms they can, however arbitrary the Act may appear."

They who find in the destruction of the tea any justification of modern riots, have little knowledge of the facts attending it, and less idea of the spirit by which the town of Boston was actuated.

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